

We started out with a budget that we agreed upon. I think it was about \$660-some billion. Then that was changed at the request of the President some time ago to \$686 billion. In addition to that, of course, we have had another \$40 billion, and another \$5 billion, and agreed to guarantee another \$10 billion. So we have spent a great deal of money. I think we have ought to give some thought as to what our priorities are to be at this point.

It is my belief we could come up with a stimulus package that would deal with the needs of unemployment and some of the medical needs there. I think we could do something that is rather limited in terms of accelerated depreciation that would cause businesses to create jobs, which is what we want to do. We do not need to spend \$120 billion simply because we have an excuse to spend.

So I am hopeful that we can get together on a stimulus package. The majority leader said this morning the Republicans refuse to meet. That is not the case at all. The Republicans are not willing to have the Appropriations Committee be part of that meeting because it is a Finance Committee responsibility. That is where we ought to be; there is no question about that.

I hope we can take a little time now to say what our priorities should be. We need a little vision, just over 2 weeks. It ought not to be too difficult to decide what it is that we need to get done and step aside from some of these other questions.

We are talking about a farm bill. I am on the Agriculture Committee and we have not even scored it. We don't know how much it will cost. Yet we are here. We want to get it on the floor. We have not had the farm bill before the committee, not even had a chance to look at it, but we were asked to mark it up. That is not the best way to deal with the important issues there. We can deal with them.

I am hopeful we will slow down just a moment, decide what it is that is most important for the country that we do in the very little time we have, and not just absolutely think we ought to be spending every dime we can possibly find. That is not necessarily the thing to do at this point.

Hopefully, we will be able to do that. I hope we can do at least those two things, the appropriations bills and the stimulus package. These other things ought to have a little more thought. We are going to be back next year, early. We can put a time certain on those and do them at that point.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the Senator withhold his suggestion of the absence of a quorum?

Mr. THOMAS. I withhold the request.

RECESS

Mr. THOMAS. If it would be more appropriate, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in recess until 2:15.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That would be appropriate.

The Chair thanks the Senator.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 12:25 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. NELSON of Florida).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee is recognized.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be given 15 minutes in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PROHIBITION OF HUMAN CLONING

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I rise to continue a discussion that began in morning business earlier today. That is on the issue of human cloning. I had not expected to be talking about this issue during the closing days of this session of Congress. But I feel compelled to do so in light of Sunday's announcement. That is indeed very troubling for everybody as they seek to understand what this is all about after Sunday's announcement that a U.S. company is pursuing the purposeful creation of cloned human embryos.

I believe all human cloning for scientific reasons, for ethical reasons, and for reasons surrounding the health and safety of women should be banned.

This whole subject of human cloning was the subject of a lot of discussion earlier this year. This summer, the House of Representatives passed a bill prohibiting the human cloning by a large and overwhelming margin. But in light of the events of September 11, much of the discussion was put aside. A lot of that changed on Sunday. And now I believe it is incumbent upon the Senate to address this critical issue before adjourning for the year.

I urge the majority leader to call up the House bill and to allow the Senate to work its will on that bill. We don't have the luxury of time that I think many of us thought we had. If we look over the last several years—really beginning in 1997, when Scottish researchers first captured the attention of the world after they used the process called somatic cell nuclear transfer to successfully clone that adult sheep by the name of Dolly—since that period of time a lot has happened in this particular body. The portrayal of human cloning has intrigued our imagination over the last 4 to 5 years. But we all must recognize that this is serious business. The idea that cloning human beings may be technologically possible challenges our fundamental beliefs—whether they be spiritual, or whether they be moral. Those people who pay attention to science ask if it is really

possible. I believe the answer is yes. But what it really causes us to do is to go back and challenge our fundamental beliefs on what the appropriate limits are or should be of human control over nature.

I tell you, as a scientist and as someone who has thought a lot about end-of-life issues or beginning-of-life issues and disease and health, it provokes, in me, a lot of concern in terms of the issues of how much to intervene, at what point, what is someone's motive, and can that motive be shifted in such a direction that the great promises of science can be used to the abuse of what most people would regard as their moral sensibilities.

After the Dolly announcement, we held a series of hearings in the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. The first hearing focused on science. We had scientists testify. We looked at all types of cloning: Animal cloning, human cellular cloning, and the cloning of a human embryo, the cloning of human individuals.

At the second hearing we had ethicists and theological representatives come in. We listened to distinguished individuals testifying from the Christian faith, the Jewish traditions, the Islamic traditions, all relating to human cloning. We also listened to philosophers well schooled in biomedical ethics.

The story went on. The National Bioethics Advisory Committee (NBAC), at the request of President Clinton, looked at, studied, and made a report on the moral and ethical issues as well as the scientific standpoints. NBAC then reported to the President that reproductive cloning was unsafe and should be prohibited by Federal law.

About a year after that, Senator BOND and I, based on our hearings, and based on that National Bioethics Advisory Committee report, introduced the Human Cloning Prohibition Act along with a number of our other colleagues. That bill would have prohibited the use of somatic cell nuclear transfer technology to produce a human embryo.

At the time—and the time today is very different; again, that was in 1998—the science of issues such as stem cell research, particularly embryonic stem cells, was all hypothetical. It was all theoretical. This whole field of embryonic stem cell research existed, but only as a hope of what might be. No research using embryonic stem cells had actually been conducted at the time.

The overall science of these issues, of cloning and stem cell research, was relatively undeveloped and even less understood. The bill got caught up in a lot of concerns that it could prevent this whole field of embryonic stem cell research from progressing, and the bill really fell by the wayside.

Indeed, almost 2 years would pass between the announcement of Dolly, the sheep, in 1997 and the groundbreaking